

## By STUART EARP Wycombe Wanderers 0, Enfield 0

**ONE POINT.** That's all Wycombe Wanderers have achieved in two key matches over the last seven days against Rothmans Isthmian League title contenders Dagenham and Enfield.

The Blues went down 2-1 at Dagenham last week and needed a good performance against champions Enfield at Loakes Park on Saturday. Unfortunately their re-arranged team produced a poor display and had to be content with a solitary point from a goalless draw.

For a match between last year's champions and runners-up in Division One this was a sad indictment. The number of errors from both sides was enormous while a general lack of ideas in both camps meant a painful 90 minutes for the 1,600 fans.

Make no mistake about it ... Wanderers were well below par on Saturday but they weren't helped by Enfield's uninspired defensive attitude that prevailed throughout the game. If the Middlesex club had shown more attacking flair they could have won the match hands down — Wanderers were that bad. But instead they sent so many back passes to their goalkeeper that Mick Lowe must have been suffering from backache on Sunday morning.

Enfield are a troubled club at the moment, with speculation rife about the resignation of manager Fred Callaghan before the match.

Some of the players seem to be far from happy and this was demonstrated in their display on the field. The funny thing was, having defended for 75 minutes, they could have emerged from their shell and won the match. The points were there for the taking in the last quarter but the visitors just pumped the ball high upfield in a vain hope of goals. The tactics were more suited to junior football.

### TEAM CHANGES

So where did it go wrong for the Blues? Certainly team changes did not help with John Maskell and Tony Horseman both standing down. Gavin Fraser returned from College to play his first game since Reading while Dylan Evans came in for 'flu victim Howard Kettleborough up front.

Fraser's inclusion meant that John Priestley was pushed up front. John's best position is midfield and he looked out of place in the front line where Evans, worried no doubt by his injured hand, had a barren afternoon. Fraser was unable to produce his wide range of skills and midfield suffered accordingly with neither Howard Kennedy nor Peter Cruse at their best.

In fact the only department functioning well was the back four. Keith Mead led the way with another

sterling display while Bob Davies was impressive at left back.

But the defence must have been staggered by the number of mistakes in front of them, particularly in the passing which hit an all time low as the team tried in vain to combine as a unit.

The only consolation for Wycombe is that three of the leading teams lost on Saturday — Dagenham, Hitchin and Tooting. It must be said that one point from two top games is not the end of the world and hasn't cost Wanderers their chance. But it would have been nice to get six points under their belts against the first and third placed teams.

Despite his problems, it was Priestley who got in Wycombe's first strike after 12 minutes when he ran onto Kennedy's nicely placed through ball. Lowe came racing out to block the shot at point blank range.

Best move of the half came in the 36th minute when Kennedy robbed Les Eason and ran 40 yards before pushing the ball through to Evans but his shot lacked power and Lowe was able to save. One glorious crossfield pass of some 45 yards by Fraser showed the youngster's talents but it was an all too rare glimpse of his skills. Kennedy ended the half with a swerving volley from Lowe's punch that was only a foot from the target.

Throughout the first half Enfield rarely tested Spittle and their dull defensive tactics won them few friends. They weren't afraid of dishing out the hard stuff on occasions, too.

The half time FA Cup scores seemed to attract more interest than the game in hand but after Micky O'Sullivan limped off with a knee injury, Enfield produced one of the closest efforts. Tony Jennings, far and away their best player, stole unnoted to head a powerful header just past the far post from a corner.

Kennedy had two long range efforts at goal which were both wide and it was a pointer to Wycombe's problems that players tried far too much individually rather than combining in team moves. Enfield were having more to say in this half and a long shot from Roger Day was tipped over the crossbar by Spittle in the 56th minute.

As the errors became more frequent a goalless draw seemed more and more likely although Alan Phillips once beat Lowe to a free kick but his effort was cleared away.

Manager Ted Powell brought on substitute Mick Holifield for the last 15 minutes in place of Priestley but Mick saw little of the ball and it was Enfield who finished the stronger side.

There were two anxious moments for the Blues in the last few minutes. Paul Birdseye upended Day inside the area but referee Hedges waved play on and during injury time Spittle hesitated in coming off his line to collect a high ball but then dived bravely to save the day.

**WYCOMBE:** P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; H. Kennedy, G. Fraser, P. Cruse; J. Priestley (sub M. Holifield 75 mins), D. Evans, I. Pearson.

**ENFIELD:** M. Lowe; A. Gibson, A. Jennings, B. Wilson, P. Fry; M. O'Sullivan (sub D. Baker 50 mins), R. Day, L. Eason; E. Reeve, K. Searle, J. Bishop.

**Referee:** D. Hedges (Oxford).

**Attendance:** 1,600.



**uffs out this Wycombe attack with John take. Brian Wilson (5) is on the ground while forward Keith Searle looks on.**